

# THE PAINTER OF PARMA; — OR — THE MAGIC OF A MASTERPIECE.

(Continued.)

Once more the outraged, cruelly aggravated, and grossly insulted artist sought to bring his enemy to listen to a word of reason. His final plea may have been a mistake. At all events, as it found utterance the count's rage burst forth into more hot and vengeful cursing and imprecation than had before soiled his tongue.

"Count Denaro!" Zononi had exclaimed, as he lightly and dexterously turned the attacking blade over his shoulder. "I implore you to desist! If you do not—if you push me to the verge of danger myself—I shall kill you!"

"No! come on!" I am not so easily killed as you think!" And the count, thus retorting, sprang to the attack with all the force at his command. He did not see—he did not feel—that his strength was leaving him. His physical exertions had been great—far beyond an exercise of body he had ever used himself to—while his insane passion, surging upon both heart and brain, did much to enervate and weaken a frame that had been already overbraced and excited by extraneous stimulants.

The keen-eyed marquis, watchful of every sign, saw that this man was tiring; and the fear came to him that the painter might utterly weaken and disarm him without being called upon, for his own safety, to strike home. "Oh," he said, in his heart, "if I could nerve Giuseppe to pricking the fellow into real anger, just for one short moment! It would be sufficient." And, with this feeling, he slipped up behind the count and hissed into his ear:

"Now Giuseppe! Remember the upper stroke—the throat! Then the heart! At him!"

A simple accident, after all, was to end the conflict. In his endeavors to avoid his antagonist's thrusts, without thrusting in return, Zononi had moved back—and back and backward still, until he reached, without discovering it, the very edge of the river's bank. Another backward step would carry him over the brink into the flood.

In this situation the count, with all the force and strength at his command, made the feint and the attack which Stefano had suggested. Zononi saw, and saw that he must put forth all his skill. A half step backward carried his left foot so far over the brink behind him that he became aware of the second danger, and instinctively sprang from it.

At that juncture the point of the count had been at his throat, and in putting it away he had left his own point advanced. This was the situation when our hero made his involuntary leap away from the river; and at the self-same moment Denaro made a desperate lunge. Threatened by this two-fold danger the painter forgot the life of his enemy, and thought only of his own; and, in a moment more his keen, bright blade entered the count's bosom, piercing him to the heart.

As quickly as possible Zononi leaped back, withdrawing the fatal steel as he did so, but he was too late. While yet uncertain as to the force and effect of the unintentional stroke, Count Giuseppe Denaro fell supine upon the trampled sward—dead!

### CHAPTER XIV.

Zononi stood aghast. When he looked upon the man where he had fallen, with his marble-like face and his staring, yet sightless, eyes turned upward; when he saw the motionless limbs, with not even a quiver to tell of life, he knew what he had done.

"The Father in heaven knows I did not mean to do it!" he said, in bitterness of spirit. "I would have spared him if I could!"

He had not spoken to the marquis, yet the marquis answered him—answered quickly and malevolently: "Yet I heard you declare but a moment since that you would surely kill him."

The painter started. He remembered the words he had spoken when seeking to persuade the count to desist from his mad onset. He remembered; and he saw what a use could be made of them against him.

"Oh marquis! Will you be so treacherous? Will you seek to torture those words into evidence against me? And but a moment ago you swore that you would help me to escape. Ah!—Peace! No; my dear, inquisitive friend, I have thee on the hip!" So spoke Stefano Farnese; and the look upon his dark visage was one of deep and deadly malignity. "By St. Paul," he added, after a brief pause, the look of hatred changing to one of triumph, "you will pry no further into my affairs! You made a false move when you sought to gain knowledge of the early life of the duke's brother!"

malefactors, and there let him be confined safely and alone. Mark that—alone! Make, sure, further, that he speaks with no one, that he sees no one, save the officer in charge, until further order is had either from the duke or myself. Away with him! Answer no questions on the way, and suffer no one to speak with the prisoner." At that moment a strange light beamed upon the painter's face, and shone out from his lustrous eyes. Something in the dark, diabolic features of the marquis, while he had touched a chord of his slumbering memory, and awakened a recollection that gave him light.

Stefano met Zononi's startled gaze; he marked the wondrous light that shot forth from his eloquent eyes; and he seemed to comprehend the meaning. He darted back a look of mingled feeling—of deadly hatred, and of swift triumph—then turned and walked swiftly away without giving a thought to the care of the body of his fallen friend.

"Signors," ventured our hero, when he saw the marquis thus coolly desert the office of friend to the man whom he had doubtless urged to his death, "will you see that the body of the count is properly cared for, since the count is properly cared for, since the count is properly cared for?"

One of the guardsmen who had Zononi in charge was a sergeant, a good-looking, intelligent man, who had evidently seen service in the field. He was past the middle age and bore the scars of battle too plainly marked to be mistaken. He seemed a little surprised by the prisoner's request, but he attended to it without remark. He turned to two of his squad, who appeared to be free from present duty, and gave them directions for guarding the body, while another was sent to procure a conveyance by which it could be properly removed.

"Is that all, signor?" the sergeant asked, with just the faintest approach to a smile on his bronzed visage. His speech was not in irony, but rather jocose, as though it had struck him as a comical thing that a man in charge of homicide should presume to direct his captors about caring for the body of the victim.

"I have one favor to ask at your hands, if you will kindly grant it, sergeant."

"You may tell me what it is."

"You have my rapier. It is a priceless weapon. If it is not to be returned to me I would like to have you take the scabbard to go with it and give it to the duke. I will tell him why I wish him to possess it if it must pass from my hands."

"Well, my friend," returned the old campaigner, with entire good nature, "considering that you have slain one of the chief nobles of Parma, I think that there can be little question about your possessing the weapon again."

"Then you will give it to the duke?"

"Don't it strike you, signor, that his grace might take it as rather a cooling thing—the giving to him of a sword that had killed one of the wealthiest of his nobles?"

"Aye, added another of the guardsmen, with a significant nod, "and one, too, that was about to become the husband of his excellency's beautiful cousin and ward."

The prisoner winced; but gave no sign of feeling, that his guard could see. Presently he replied to the sergeant:

"I think you need have no fear of that. Antonio is a dear lover of art, and that rapier was once the property of a master whose memory he holds in highest reverence."

"Well, well, I'll think about it. At all events the duke shall know what you have said."

"That will answer," said Zononi. "But," he added, after a little pause, "it might be well if you should inform him that the master who formerly owned the weapon was Murillo."

"Murillo!" repeated the veteran, his face the picture of pleased surprise. "What did you know of Bartolome Murillo?"

went to Madrid, and I suppose you came to Italy." The old sergeant was greatly pleased; and, further, he returned to Zononi his rapier, having first obtained a promise that it should not be used against peace and good order. The fact was, not only Batista, but all other of the guardsmen present, had witnessed enough of the late conflict to know that the count had been the aggressor, and that the painter had done all he could to avoid the conflict. The result was fortunate for our hero; and it impressed him as a favorable augury. His rapier had been restored to him before he had reached the main part of the city; so he was permitted to walk along with the sergeant in a seemingly friendly manner, and no one who saw them could have suspected that the handsome-faced gentleman with the golden-sheathed rapier, walking along so pleasantly with the old guardsman, was a prisoner of the malefactors.

"The prison of the malefactors," as Stefano had called it, was really the only prison of consequence in the city. There were two or three minor places of detention. It was near only proper prison house, and the ducal palace and hall of justice, or multitude of iron-grated loop-holes, or embrasures—they could hardly be called windows—overlooking the river, the channel washing its foundation.

And here another benefit resulted to the prisoner from his curious comparison of notes with the old sergeant. That officer, in transferring him to the keeper of the prison, told the story of the arrest in as favorable a light as possible. The truth was, Rafael Batista despised the Marquis Stefano, as did a majority of the city guard. He had been for several years a thorn in the flesh to them. His drunken escapades had been many, and but a short time between them; and many a consummate rascal had been forced to surrender at his dictation. He had no official authority, but they dared not offend him. A certain event they had not forgotten. It was the following:

On a certain night, little more than two years ago, Stefano was on the Grand Piazza, in company with half a dozen companions, all of them riotously intoxicated. They had torn down several signs over the doors and windows of respectable artisans and tradesmen; had broken the windows of dwelling-houses, and had finally gathered around the marble statue of Correggio, and began pelting it with paving stones and balls of mud from the gutters. The guardsmen on duty in the piazza had warned them repeatedly, but without effect. When the desecration of the beautiful statue began, however, they could endure no more, and interfered by force.

Two of the officers took the marquis in hand and carried him home. Two other young nobles were also carried to their homes, three of the number, being sons of wealthy merchants, were delivered over to the captain in charge at the headquarters, where they were kept till morning and then suffered to depart with several reprimands.

On the following day an officer of the force—Philip Salvio—entered complaint and full information of the night's debauch before the duke, the result of which was the administering of a public reprimand to the whole party, the marquis coming in for the severest and most scathing part of it.

Three nights later Philip Salvio was stabbed to the heart, in a narrow, dark street, near the river, and his body thrown into the current; but it was drawn out by another officer, a short distance farther down the stream and the spot where he had been assassinated was discovered.

It was known very well that Marquis Stefano had done the deed, cowardly deed; but the one man who could have sworn to it dared not, and he went clear—clear of apprehension and punishment; but not clear from opprobrium and hatred.

At the prison, when Zononi was delivered over to the keeper, the sergeant repeated the orders which he had received from the marquis, but there was no formal order of committal, nor had there been any order for the arrest; so the painter, upon giving his word that he would not try to escape, was conducted to an apartment in the suite of the keeper, well and comfortably furnished, besides being of goodly size and clean and airy. In fact, it was a chamber where the officer might have placed one of his visiting friends. The only approach to a prison look about it was that upon lifting the silken curtains of the windows a light but firm netting of iron appeared beneath them. And here supper was brought in; and here the prisoner was to pass the night.

And what were his feelings? He knew the law; and the law said he must die! Not even the ducal power could save or relieve him. The killing of a noble by plebeian was a deed to be punished with death—no more; no less. And when he remembered the testimony which Stefano would give against him, his last hope of living died out. Could the duke have possessed the power of pardon, as kings and emperors did, he might have a hope; but such was not the case. In fact, the rulings of the council, with the chief justices at his head, were as far beyond the power of the duke to change or modify as was his power beyond that of his lowest menial.

Of Zononi's thoughts of Isabel we can well judge. They were sacred—holy—and with them we will leave him for the night.

Meantime, Marquis Stefano had not been idle. It was his plan that the duke should remain as long in ignorance of what had occurred as possible. On his arrival in the city he went at once to the office of the council, where he was sure of finding some of the members, they usually having business that kept them into the evening.

This council, called "The Council of Twenty," sat in secret when they chose so to do. It was, in fact, a secret tribunal, and like its prototype, the Council of Ten, of Venice, was an

absolute power, responsible to no body; its decrees beyond recall or dispute, its justice knowing but little of the temper of mercy. Baron Alonzo Dodero was president of the council and justice of its courts. He was fully three score, a large, heavily-framed man, stern and uncompromising, with a firm faith, not only in the divine right of kings, but in the divine right of the nobility as well. He scarcely believed in the right of a plebeian class, which the patrician order was bound to respect. In his administration of the affairs of this secret office, during a term of several years, he had never been known to overlook or pardon an offense of a low-born man or woman against a noble. According to his doctrine, the governing class must of necessity be higher; and, if the governed should be once allowed to trench upon the divine right of their rulers, all order in society would be at an end and the state city would be in danger. Anarchy and political ruin would result, and the terrible rebellion of Masaniello, in Naples, would be copied in Parma.

This man Stefano found in the council chamber, or one of the ante-rooms, together with six others of his fellows. And to them he told his story. We need not repeat his details, as they can be well imagined. The story, in brief, as he told it, was as follows:

It was well known to the grave and renowned signors that Count Giuseppe Denaro had earnestly sought the hand of Princess Isabel di Varona in hand of Princess Isabel di Varona in marriage, and her guardian, the duke, had favored his suit, promising him the hand of the fair lady if he could win her consent; and this he could have done had his advice been taken in a certain manner, which he would explain.

To be Continued.

### THE GHASTLY CROCODILE.

Eats Men, But Possesses Beauty and Domestic Virtues.

Sea crocodiles, a rare species, have been known to reach a length of thirty feet. They are not so man-hungry, however, as the "mugger," or infant crocodile, of India, which is said not to be diminishing in numbers, and which fairly swarm even in the smaller rivers.

These unclean reptiles are so numerous about many streams that the village watering places have to be palisaded by a loop fence, built out into the stream to prevent the women who come to dip water from being gobbled up by them.

Crocodile worship is the queerest freak of Indian religion. Apparently the frightful creatures are revered, precisely, because they are dangerous, and must be propitiated by fair words. In any case the Hindoos are not permitted, by their religion, to kill either crocodiles or any other living creature.

So one finds in many villages a permanently resident crocodile, known by name, and treated respectfully, taking toll of the natives, year by year, until it becomes rather a point of local pride to tell how many children the fat old sinner, who suns himself in the mud, utterly fearless of reprisals, has eaten.

In some cases sacred crocodiles are kept in narrow ponds and fed by Brahmin priests. And it is curious to note that this custom dates back to the time of the ancient Egyptians.

Crocodiles know a thing or two. In very hot climates they bury their eggs in the sand and the sun hatches them. Where the nights are cool enough so that the sand does not retain the sun's heat the "crocodilus Porosus," the estuary crocodile of the east, puts its eggs in the middle of a heaped-up mound of vegetation. This heats by fermentation, precisely like wet hay in a stack and keeps the eggs warm until they hatch out. The female crocodile guards the nest jealously and small boys don't try to rob it as a rule.

The Trochilus, or crocodile bird, the queer little convey that always lives with the big saurians, also lays its eggs in the sand, but keeps the nest warm at night by sitting on it.

### TEST OF DRINKING WATER.

Simple Way of Detecting Sewage or Other Impurities.

Here is a simple test for the presence of sewage in water. All drinking water should be tested in town or country frequently, as there are other impurities besides sewage which are quite as deadly, and every cistern of water is liable to be a source of blood poisoning. Mice, rats and other pests must have water, and many a case of typhoid is set up by such as these falling into the cistern and remaining there for months in a decomposed state.

To detect this impure condition is very simple and unfailling. Draw a tumbler of water from the tap at night, put a piece of white lump sugar into it, and place it on the kitchen mantel shelf or anywhere that the temperature will not be under 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

In the morning the water, if pure, will be perfectly clear, if contaminated by sewage or other impurities the water will be milky. This is a simple and safe test well known in chemistry.

### HER DEFENCE.

Miss Wantano—Why do you say you love the company of women? You are always with a lot of men.

Miss Filtrons—Are not men the company of women, as a rule?

### RIGHT IN HIS LINE.

Who was the chief mover in that affair? A truckman.

### TOBACCO HEART.



MILBURN'S HEART & NERVE PILLS

HAVE you been smoking a good deal lately and feel an occasional twinge of pain round your heart? Are you short of breath, nervous, unwell, sensation of pins and needles going through your arm and fingers? Better take a box of two of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills and get cured before things become too serious.

Here's what Mr. John James, of Caledonia, Ont., has to say about them: "I have had serious heart trouble for four years, and then seemed to stop beating only to commence again with unusual rapidity. This unhealthy action of my heart caused shortness of breath, weakness and debility. I tried many medicines and spent a great deal of money but could not get any help."

Last November, however, I read of a man, afflicted like myself, being cured by Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills. I went to Roper's drug store and bought a box. When I had finished taking it I was so much better I bought another box and this completed the cure. My heart has not bothered me since, and I strongly recommend all sufferers from heart and nerve trouble, caused by excessive use of tobacco, to give Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills a fair and faithful trial."

Price 50c. a box or 3 boxes for \$1.25. All druggists. T. Milburn & Co., Toronto, Ont.

LAXA-LIVER PILLS cure Constipation, Biliousness and Dyspepsia. Price 25c.

### ENGLAND'S CHAMPION GODFATHER

Prince of Wales has officiated in that Capacity Seventy-Five Times.

The Prince of Wales is the champion godfather of Great Britain, his record being seventy-five occasions on which he has officiated in that capacity. He also holds another unique record in this respect in having stood as godfather to the Duke of Marlborough as well as to the Duke of Marlborough's infant heir—that is, godfather to both the father and the son.

The ceremony in connection with the baptism of the son took place at the Chapel Royal, St. James' Palace, on Saturday, the 16th day of October, 1897, when the Prince of Wales, who had been one of the godfathers at the Duke's christening twenty-five years before, in the same chapel, acted in a similar capacity for the Duke's son, the other sponsors being the Marchioness of Blandford and Mr. William Vanderbilt.

The Emperor of Germany stands godfather to all seventh sons in Prussia. The former Empress Eugenie in the year acted as godmother for the 230 children who were born in France on the 16th of March, 1856, the same day as the Prince Imperial. Mr. Cecil Rhodes is godfather to about forty young scions of the aristocracy. It is his custom to transfer to each of his godchildren fifty shares in the De Beers Mines.

### A CREDITOR.

Susie—Mr. Inkslinger, down town, told the Missus you were working for posterity.

Mr. Scribbles—Inkslinger said he told Susie—Yes; and the missus said she wished they'd send you a check for \$100 wuz tired of waitin' to get something on account.

### Can't Sleep.



The weary vigils of the night, hours that drag like days. Here they come, and how unwelcome they are! A system robbed by sleeplessness of its natural rest cannot be vigorous or strong. The nerves are at fault, must be built up. Dr. Ward's Blood and Nerve Pills are the remedy that cures.

### MISS EMMA TEMPLE.

HERE IS WHAT SHE SAYS:

At last, after eight months of physical weakness and nervous prostration, by over exertion and want of rest, which time I suffered greatly, and during which time I was unable to find any relief, I found a medicine (Dr. Ward's Blood and Nerve Pills) that in three months restored my physical system, and built up my physical system, and made me strong and well. They removed the dizziness, and in consequence of taking these valuable Pills I look forward to the future with hope. I have to thank your generous and kind offer of these Pills for the present good health and strength.

Signed, EMMA TEMPLE, Hastings.

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